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The CARILLON *in* LITERATURE

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To Bliss Perry,

with the regards of

the author,

This Edition is Limited
to Two Hundred Copies
for America and England

William Gorham Rice

Cambridge, Mass.

April fifth 1916.

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TO

JOSEF DENYN

OF MECHLIN

MASTER BELL-MASTER

AND TO

HIS FRIEND AND MINE

PROSPER VERHEYDEN

OF ANTWERP

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VOORSLAG

HIGH tower clocks in the Low Countries play a tune just before the hour to call attention to the strokes of the great bell about to sound. In earlier times this tune was short and had the name of *voorslag,* which put into English is *forestroke.* So this *voorslag* of mine in a concert where the art of others is to supply the larger music will have but few measures.

He who does not know the civic character of the carillon, or how it differs from a chime, and seeks for definition, is referred to the chapter on *Origin, Construction and Technique,* included among the notes in the last pages of this book. Indeed, such a one may also think it worth while to read there the account of *An Evening Concert at Mechlin.*

The notes referred to are taken from *Carillons of Belgium and Holland,* which, for-

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tunately, I had completed just before the great war began. Since that fateful August many inquiries have come to me concerning what has happened to Belgian belfries, and, though my information is slight, it is a satisfaction to share it with all who are interested.

St. Rombold's noble tower at Mechlin, with its finest of all carillons, was struck seven times by German shells during the bombardments of August and September, 1914. The tower, however, still stands firm and happily the wonderful bells are uninjured, though the key-board is smashed. The devoted carillonneur remained at his post to the very end. On the last night that he climbed the tower the soldiers marshalled in the Grand' Place beneath him were stirred by his spirited playing of Valeureux Liégeois, God Save the King, The Russian Hymn, The Marseillaise, De Vlaamsche Leeuw (The Lion of Flanders), and other national airs.

St. Peter's Church at Louvain, with its

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carillon, counted among the best, is gone. St. Gertrude's Church, also at Louvain, and having one of the great carillons, was in a part of the city not put to the torch and is reported unharmed. The magnificent Cloth Hall of Ypres has been battered down and its splendid bells are in the ruins. The carillons of Liége, Namur, Dinant, Visé, Dixmude, Nieuport, and Alost, are apparently destroyed. None of these were of the highest rank. Termonde's bells broke in pieces as they fell upon the pavement of the square. The carillons of Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp, all three of the very first order, seem to be uninjured.

Josef Denyn, the great bell-master, driven out of his home at Mechlin, found refuge with friends near Tunbridge Wells, England, and is giving notable concerts on some of the half-dozen carillons that country possesses. In September last, invited by the Dutch authorities, he went to Arnhem, and is

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reconstructing the key-board and mechanism by which the thirty-five fine Hemony bells in the Groote Kerk are played. Zutfen and Nimeguen, awakened even in this time of stress to the need of improvement in the arrangement of their bells, are also asking him to put their carillons in order.

Incidentally I would add that letters tell me that Middelburg, Delft, Haarlem, Alkmaar, Amersfoort, Nykerk, and Deventer are also moving to better their carillons, and that Amsterdam within a few months has restored in the Zuiderkerk and the Westerkerk the old custom of playing before service, which Sunday playing in latter days has been confined solely to Belgium. So there is a decided and patriotic revival of the carillon art in the northern Netherlands though disaster is overtaking the belfries of its southern neighbour.

Felix Van Aerschodt, the most famous of modern Belgian bell-makers, had his house and foundry at Louvain burned, was seized

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as a citizen hostage and threatened with death, but finally escaped and is also in England. Prosper Verheyden, student of carillons, chief of the *Secréteriat* of Antwerp, fled in the exodus ordered before the siege, but obeying the call of the service he felt he could render to those left in the city, returned there in January last. Since then no word can be obtained of him.

In the pleasant work of literary exploration now completed I have not been alone, and my thanks are particularly expressed to the five friends who each have found a flower for this anthology. Still others hereafter may discover new things and I trust they will not forget my desire to learn of their success. The Houghton Mifflin Company have courteously permitted me to use the poem by Longfellow, and to them and to other publishers who have been equally kind, grateful acknowledgment is made.

But a *voorslag* properly may not have

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many measures; therefore an end to the prelude. I shall be content if what has been the avocation of a Summer holiday reveals some deeper meanings in the music of the peoples to whom of right Belgium and Holland belong.

WILLIAM GORHAM RICE.

135 WASHINGTON AVENUE,
ALBANY, N. Y.

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The CARILLON *in* LITERATURE

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THE CARILLON IN LITERATURE

I OPEN my note-book of the summer of 1913 and there is written: "Antwerp. Again this enchanting entrance into Europe. At sunrise we steamed slowly up the Scheldt, our great ship standing high above the many red-tiled roofs and long rows of shaped trees bordering the canals and roadways, gaining sight here and there of awakening farm life. It was as if we were welcomed to intimate friendship with the land.

"With a constant shifting of the rudder we were borne up the winding channel of the tidal river. . . . Gradually the more distant scene unfolded and Antwerp's Cathedral showed in a golden mist. As we came nearer we heard from the spire a rich and varied music of bells. What was the tune that

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floated down to us as a morning greeting? Wagner somewhere has written:

> . . . . At daybreak
> When the silvery bells were ringing!

"Was it some air of his we heard? Surely the swan-boat might have appeared at any turn among those reedy banks, for at this very place, 'The Scheldt near Antwerp,' the scene of *Lohengrin* is laid.

"Looking out over the trees of the Place Verte, from the open windows of our hotel, we see the Cathedral's spire, now close enough to reveal the delicate details of its beauty, and above the noise of flower market, and tram cars, in the busy square below, we hear, before the great bell Karolus strikes the hour, again the melody of the earlier morning."

We soon learned it was from a carillon that the music came, but just what a carillon was no one could be found to tell. Nor did personal exploration then in the *Stadsbibliotheek*

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at Antwerp, nor later in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Paris, and in the British Museum, and in many other great libraries, discover any book which offered adequate definition, or gave the story of this distinctive Low Country music. Only two books even bearing *Carillon* in their title were anywhere revealed. One of these, found in the reserved list of the University Library at Amsterdam, is an octavo of eight pages, dated Delft 1678, which discourses upon the uselessness of C sharp and D sharp in the bass of carillons, and the other, brought to light in the Royal Library of the Hague, is a small quarto, printed at Utrecht in 1737, and it treats chiefly of carillon mathematics and bell tradition. Here and there were also found pamphlets of local tradition, or formal entries in municipal records and archæological annals, or even some modern ephemeral article discussing carillon technique or construction. Yet all was fragmentary and incomplete. Neverthe-

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less it was the study of all these combined that gave the basis for what was indeed the first attempt at comprehensive treatment of the carillon art.

Dry records and dusty parchments of the past were not the only persuasions to interesting discovery in the domain of the carillon. Paths leading into literary fields soon began to invite the explorer. Ambassadors, and poets, and travellers, it appeared, had listened to this music, and in different centuries, in different languages, with charm, with pathos, with humour even, they had admiringly written the thoughts the carillon awakened, or had pictured the scenes which it made complete. Thus not a few whose names have a place in literature were found to have contributed a part in the story of a unique music; a music which is at the same time ancient and to-day existing.

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I

Majestic is the sweep of space and time, and the silence, with this music dominating all, which Dante Gabriel Rossetti conceived and embodied in his poem *Antwerp and Bruges.*

I climbed the stair in Antwerp church,
  What time the circling thews of sound
  At sunset seemed to heave it round.
Far up, the carillon did search
The wind, and the birds came to perch
  Far under, where the gables wound.

In Antwerp harbour on the Scheldt
  I stood alone, a certain space
  Of night. The mist was near my face;
Deep on, the flow was heard and felt.
The carillon kept pause, and dwelt
  In music through the silent place.

John Memmeling and John Van Eyck
  Hold state at Bruges. In sore shame
  I scanned the works that keep their name.
The carillon, which then did strike
Mine ears, was heard of theirs alike:
  It set me closer unto them.

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I climbed at Bruges all the flight
  The belfry has of ancient stone.
  For leagues I saw the east wind blown;
The earth was grey, the sky was white.
I stood so near upon the height
  That my flesh felt the carillon.

II

Thackeray in London after a week's holiday, spent in the early sixties under the shadow of Antwerp's spire, found the companionship of its music continuing with him. Easily it became a theme in his *Roundabout Papers,* and with what characteristic grace he transports us into his own atmosphere of tune.

I was awakened this morning with the chimes which Antwerp cathedral clock plays at half-hours. The tune has been haunting me ever since, as tunes will. You dress, eat, drink, walk, and talk to yourself to their tune; their inaudible jingle accompanies you all day; you read the sentences of the paper to their rhythm. I tried uncouthly to imitate the tune to the ladies of the family at breakfast, and they say it is "the shadow dance of *Dinorah.*" It may be so. I dimly remember that my

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body was once present during the performance of that opera, whilst my eyes were closed, and my intellectual faculties dormant at the back of the box; howbeit, I have learned that shadow dance from hearing it pealing up ever so high in the air, at night, morn, noon.

How pleasant to lie awake and listen! whilst the old city is asleep at midnight, or waking up rosy at sunrise, or basking in noon, or swept by the scudding rain which drives in gusts over the broad places, and the great shining river; or sparkling in the snow which dresses up a hundred thousand masts, peaks, and towers; or wrapt round with thunder-cloud canopies, before which the white gables shine whiter; day and night the carillon plays its fantastic melodies overhead. The bells go on ringing. *Quot vivos vocant, mortuos plangunt, fulgura frangunt;* so on to the past and future tenses, and for how many nights, days, and years! Whilst the French were pitching their *fulgura* into Chasse's citadel, the bells went on ringing quite cheerfully. Whilst the scaffolds were up and guarded by Alva's soldiery, and regiments of penitents, blue, black, and grey, poured out of churches and convents, droning their dirges, and marching to the Place of the Hôtel de Ville, where heretics and rebels were to meet their doom, the bells up yonder were chanting at their appointed half hours and quarters, and rang *the mauvais quart d'heure* for many a poor soul. This bell can see as far away as the towers and dykes of Rotterdam. That one can call a greeting to St. Ursula's at Brussels, and toss a recognition to that one at the

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town-hall of Oudenaarde, and remember how after a great struggle there a hundred and fifty years ago the whole plain was covered with the flying French cavalry—Burgundy, and Berri, and the Chevalier of St. George flying like the rest. "What is your clamour about Oudenaarde?" says another bell. "Be still, thou querulous old clapper! *I* can see over to Hougomont and St. Jean. And about forty-five years since, I rang all through one Sunday in June, when there was such a battle going on in the cornfields there, as none of you others ever heard tolled of. Yes, from morning service until after vespers, the French and English were all at it, ding-dong." And then calls of business intervening, the bells have to give up their private jangle, resume their professional duty, and sing their hourly chorus out of *Dinorah*.

What a prodigious distance those bells can be heard! I was awakened this morning to their tune, I say. I have been hearing it constantly ever since. And this house where I write is two hundred and ten miles from Antwerp. And it is a week off; and there is the bell still jangling its shadow dance out of *Dinorah*. An audible shadow, you understand, and an invisible sound, but quite distinct; and a plague take the tune!

III

What carillon Stevenson first heard we do not know. Such music must have sounded

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over him more than once as Belgium market-place and church tower in Northern France were passed on his inland voyage. And though Arethusa and Cigarette entered upon their adventures on the waters of the Scheldt it was not until *The Oise in Flood* was reached that their historian recorded how a new sensation of sound revealed itself.

On the other side of the valley a group of red roofs and a belfry showed among the foliage; thence some inspired bell ringer made the afternoon musical on a chime of bells. There was something very sweet and taking in the air he played and we thought we had never heard bells speak so intelligently or sing so melodiously as these. It must have been after some such measure that the spinners and the young maids sang "Come away, Death," in the Shakespearian Illyria.

There is so often a threatening note, something blatant and metallic in the voice of bells that I believe we have fully more pain than pleasure in hearing them; these as they sounded abroad, now high, now low, now with a plaintive cadence, were always moderate and tunable and seemed to fall into the spirit of the still rustic places like noise of a waterfall. I could have blessed the priest or the heritors, or whosoever may be concerned with such affairs in France who had left these sweet old bells to

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gladden the afternoon. At last the bells ceased and with their note the sun withdrew. The piece was at an end; shadow and silence possessed the valley of the Oise.

IV

It was at Bruges that Longfellow came under the spell of the carillon. At once his imagination was awakened and we foresee his poem in the entries in his diary of 1842.

May 30. In the evening took the railway from Ghent to Bruges. Stopped at La Fleur de Blé, attracted by the name, and found it a good hotel. It was not yet night; and I strolled through the fine old streets and felt myself a hundred years old. The chimes seemed to be ringing incessantly; and the air of repose and antiquity was delightful. Oh, those chimes, those chimes! how deliciously they lull one to sleep! The little bells, with their clear, liquid notes, like the voices of boys in a choir, and the solemn bass of the great bell tolling in, like the voice of a friar!

May 31. Rose before five and climbed the high belfry which was once crowned by the gilded copper dragon now at Ghent. The carillon of forty-eight bells; the little chamber in the tower; the machinery, like a huge barrel-organ, with keys like a musical instrument for the

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carillonneur; the view from the tower; the singing of swallows with the chimes; the fresh morning air; the mist in the horizon; the red roofs far below; the canal, like a silver clasp, linking the city with the sea—how much to remember!

V

The poem, *The Belfry of Bruges,* the first part of which is called *Carillon,* was probably begun by Longfellow during his first visit to Bruges, his editor says, and finished some months later when he was again there returning home. More than any other literary utterance its verses have drawn English-speaking travellers to this unique music. Wonderfully his genius gives the scene at night, when silence perfects the sound of the bells.

In the ancient town of Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city,
As the evening shades descended,
Low and loud and sweetly blended,
Low at times and loud at times,
And changing like a poet's rhymes,

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Rang the beautiful wild chimes
From the belfry in the market
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

Then, with deep sonorous clangor
Calmly answering their sweet anger,
When the wrangling bells had ended,
Slowly struck the clock eleven,
And, from out the silent heaven,
Silence on the town descended.
Silence, silence everywhere,
On the earth and in the air,
Save that footsteps here and there
Of some burgher home returning,
By the street lamps faintly burning,
For a moment woke the echoes
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

But amid my broken slumbers
Still I heard those magic numbers,
As they loud proclaimed the flight
And stolen marches of the night;
Till their chimes in sweet collision
Mingled with each wandering vision,
Mingled with the fortune-telling
Gipsy-bands of dreams and fancies,
Which amid the waste expanses
Of the silent land of trances
Have their solitary dwelling;

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All else seemed asleep in Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city.

And I thought how like these chimes
Are the poet's airy rhymes,
All his rhymes and roundelays,
His conceits, and songs, and ditties,
From the belfry of his brain,
Scattered downward, though in vain,
On the roofs and stones of cities!
For by night the drowsy ear
Under its curtains cannot hear,
And by day men go their ways,
Hearing the music as they pass,
But deeming it no more, alas!
Than the hollow sound of brass.

Yet, perchance a sleepless wight,
Lodging at some humble inn
In the narrow lanes of life,
When the dusk and hush of night
Shut out the incessant din
Of daylight and its toil and strife,
May listen with a calm delight
To the poet's melodies,
Till he hears, or dreams he hears,
Intermingled with the song,
Thoughts that he has cherished long;
Hears amid the chime and singing

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The bells of his own village ringing,
And wakes, and finds his slumberous eyes
Wet with most delicious tears.

Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay
In Bruges, at the Fleur de Blé,
Listening with a wild delight
To the chimes that, through the night,
Rang their changes from the belfry
Of that quaint old Flemish city.

VI

As we read the second part of *The Belfry of Bruges,* its daytime pictures, conceived as Longfellow stood on the lofty balcony near the carillon, it is not alone his own visions of the past that become real. His art produces also in us a reflective mood and other scenes and events in history, associated with bell-tower after bell-tower in the Low Countries, live again.

In the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry old and brown;
Thrice consumed and thrice rebuilded, still it watches o'er the town.

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As the summer morn was breaking, on that lofty tower I stood,
And the world threw off the darkness, like the weeds of widowhood.

Thick with towns and hamlets studded, and with streams and vapours grey,
Like a shield embossed with silver, round and vast the landscape lay.

At my feet the city slumbered. From its chimneys, here and there,
Wreaths of snow-white smoke, ascending, vanished, ghost-like, into air.

Not a sound rose from the city at that early morning hour,
But I heard a heart of iron beating in the ancient tower.

From their nests beneath the rafters sang the swallows wild and high;
And the world, beneath me sleeping, seemed more distant than the sky.

Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the olden times,
With their strange, unearthly changes rang the melancholy chimes,

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Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the nuns
sing in the choir;
And the great bell tolled among them, like the chanting
of a friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms filled
my brain;
They who live in history only, seemed to walk the earth
again;

All the Foresters of Flanders,—mighty Baldwin Bras de
Fer,
Lyderick du Bucq and Cressy, Philip, Guy de Dampierre.

I beheld the pageants splendid that adorned those days
of old;
Stately dames, like queens attended, knights who bore
the Fleece of Gold;

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden ar-
gosies;
Ministers from twenty nations; more than royal pomp
and ease.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the
ground;
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk and
hound;

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And her lighted bridal-chamber, where a duke slept with the queen,
And the armed guard around them, and the sword unsheathed between.

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and Juliers bold,
Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the Spurs of Gold;

Saw the fight at Minnewater, saw the White Hoods moving west,
Saw great Artevelde victorious scale the Golden Dragon's nest.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with terror smote;
And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin's throat;

Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and dike of sand,
"I am Roland! I am Roland! there is victory in the land!"

Then the sound of drums aroused me. The awakened city's roar
Chased the phantoms I had summoned back into their graves once more.

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Hours had passed away like minutes; and, before I was aware,
Lo! the shadow of the belfry crossed the sun-illumined square.

VII

To assert that the word *belfry* in its origin is not related to *bell* would seem to deny something manifestly true; yet the resemblance appears to be purely accidental. Of far greater consequence it is that *belfry* carries in its derivation an idea of large historic significance. Larousse, under *beffroi*, treats the latter feature at length and the Oxford Dictionary says, in substance:

Belfry: Pointing to a late Latin type "berefredus," adopted from the Teutonic "bergfrid." In English its acceptance was doubtless due to popular association with "bell" and the particular association which was in consequence given to the word. The meaning has passed from a movable tower used by besiegers and besieged, to a tower to protect watchmen, a watch tower, beacon tower, alarum bell tower, bell tower, place where a bell is hung. "Frid," it is generally agreed, is a form of

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"fridu," peace, security, shelter; and "berg-en" means to protect, defend; the whole meaning "protecting or defensive place of shelter."

VIII

The lofty carillon towers, often of great architectural beauty and perfect in their setting, were indeed fitting symbols of municipal freedom. Their proportions and their strength, their domination of the scene, satisfied the eye even before their melodies came to please the ear. By day and by night they were a constant, enduring and inspiring evidence of existing civic solidarity. Grant Allen in *The European Tour,* making analysis of the art of Belgium, declares:

These Flemish belfries are in themselves very interesting relics, because they were the first symbols of corporate existence and municipal power which every town wished to erect in the Middle Ages. The use of the bell was to summon the citizens to arms in defence of their rights, or to counsel for their common liberties. Every Teutonic burgher community desired to wring the right

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of erecting such a belfry from its feudal lord; and those of Bruges and Ghent are still majestic memorials of the freedom-loving wool-staplers of the thirteenth century. By the side of the Belfry stands the Cloth Hall, representing the trade from which the town derived its wealth.

IX

Georges Rodenbach, in the novel *Le Carillonneur,* shows the Brugians requiring that the man they choose shall present in his playing all the depth of feeling of the past and present city. With dramatic power Rodenbach has expressed the soul of that ancient town and portrayed its bell-master from the day of his triumph until the day of his tragic death among the bells.

Joris Borluut is the carillonneur of Bruges. These are grave and important functions, which cannot be entrusted to the first comer. All the feelings and emotions and experiences of an old city, the whole of the priceless moral treasure accumulated during many centuries, must find expression in the music of the belfry bells. Success and failure, smiles and tears, illusions and realities, must all be blended here into one sweet harmony.

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A consummate artist is essential, but one who understands Bruges is essential also, for the difficult task is assigned him of concretising, so to speak, the soul of the Flemish town. In the merry laughter and plaintive sighing of the old bells, the citizens of Bruges require to find the echo of that which they feel within themselves. None, therefore, can be as competent to judge of the qualifications of an aspirant for the post of *carillonneur* as the citizens, whose hearts beat in unison with the chimes that have rung in so many years lit up with the glad sunshine of hope, and that have rung out so many veiled in sorrow and gloom.

Thus is Joris Borluut chosen by the universal suffrage of his fellow-citizens to be the municipal bell-ringer. The day of his election is a triumphal day for him, not only on account of the unanimous vote of sympathy and confidence accorded him by the citizens of Bruges, but because Joris is a dreamer and an idealist living in daily and intimate communion with the Ville Morte, the invisible power of which he feels within himself. The thousand melodies pent up within the Flemish soul, whose incarnation Bruges is, are only waiting for the musician who can hear and reveal them. Such is the mission of Joris Borluut, and he knows that it is a sacred mission, and a mission he alone is capable of fulfilling.

Full of hope and confidence and brave resolution, he ascends the belfry tower, and the peal of the bells, alternately solemn and merry, resounds throughout the old town, as if he had communicated to them something of

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his innermost self. The whole past of Bruges vibrates in the air, and the song of the bells is carried beyond the city, borne on the wings of the wind to the peaceful pastures and meadows around.

X

A critical analysis of *Le Carilloneur,* and *Bruges-la-Morte,* a novel also by Rodenbach, has recently appeared in The Fortnightly Review. There Dr. Chatterton-Hill with large comprehension of the subject, shows the part tower music bears in expressing the character of a municipality as it has developed through centuries of eventful history.

What we owe to Georges Rodenbach is not the mere painting of a portrait, but the creation of a living personality. He has put life into the city of the dead, he has raised up Bruges by the power of his love for her. And what we see before us when we read *Bruges-la-Morte* and *Le Carillonneur,* are not only the steeples and the gabled roofs and the silent canals of a venerable town; beyond these and behind them we feel the presence of something which imparts into stone and brick and water the breath of life, of something that is lacking in the

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mere descriptive guide-book, however minute in its details it may be—and this "something" is the *soul* of a city. Rodenbach has resuscitated the soul of Bruges; he has helped us not only to hear, but to be penetrated by, the infinitely sad and wonderfully sweet music which vibrates in the air of the old Flemish city. We hear this music as it sings and weeps alternately in the bells that merrily peal on festival and market days, or that softly chime in the fading light of evening. We feel it palpitating in our hearts, we hear its echo in the shade cast by the trees that border the innumerable canals. It brings back to us the memory of the glorious past of Bruges, brilliant with hope, of a world that was and that is no more, whose splendour was great but ephemeral, and which survives only in venerable and moss-grown ruins.

XI

If Rodenbach takes what may be considered as largely an objective view of carillon music, it is in one of George Macdonald's novels that we find ourselves realizing its subjective characteristics. Vividly does the Scotch writer show in *Robert Falconer* the emotions awakened in that youthful wanderer and

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lover of melody as he finds himself unexpectedly in command of the majestically vibrating harmonies of the bells in the spire high above him.

Robert was slowly descending still, when he saw on his left hand a door ajar. He would look what mystery lay within. A push opened it. He discovered only a little chamber lined with wood. In the centre stood something —a benchlike piece of furniture, plain and worn. He advanced a step; peered over the top of it; saw keys, white and black; saw pedals below; it was an organ! Two strides brought him in front of it. A wooden stool, polished and hollowed with centuries of use, was before it. But where was the bellows? That might be down hundreds of steps below, for he was halfway only to the ground. He seated himself musingly, and struck, as he thought, a dumb chord. Responded, up in the air, far overhead, a mighty booming clang. Startled, almost frightened, Robert sprang from the stool, and without knowing why, moved only by the chastity of delight, flung the door to the post. It banged and clicked. Almost mad with the joy of the titanic instrument, he seated himself again at the keys, and plunged into a tempest of clanging harmony.

From the resounding cone of bells overhead he no longer heard their tones proceed, but saw level-winged forms of light speeding off with a message to the nations.

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It was only his roused fantasy; but a sweet tone is nevertheless a messenger of God; and a right harmony and sequence of such tones is a little gospel.

At length he found himself following, till that moment unconsciously, the chain of tunes he well remembered having played on his violin to Maisie. Ere he had finished the last, his passion had begun to fold its wings, and he grew dimly aware of a beating at the door of the solitary chamber in which he sat. He knew nothing of the enormity of which he was guilty—presenting the city of Antwerp with a glorious fantasia.

XII

To Victor Hugo, awakened in the night at Mechlin, a vision appeared which he put in verse so exquisite in imagery and native cadence as to make all translation inadequate—a vision of the spirit of carillon music dressed like a Spanish dancer lightly descending from the heavens by a staircase of invisible crystal and from her silver raiment scattering magic notes upon a sleeping world. The poem in *Les rayons et les ombres,* bears the legend: *Ecrit sur la vitre d'une fenêtre flamande.*

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J'aime le carillon dans tes cités antiques,
O vieux pays gardien de tes mœurs domestiques,
Noble Flandre, où le nord se réchauffe engourdi
Au soleil de Castille et s'accouple au midi!
Le carillon, c'est l'heure inattendue et folle,
Que l'œil croit voir, vêtue en danseuse espagnole,
Apparaître soudain par le trou vif et clair
Que ferait en s'ouvrant une porte de l'air;
Elle vient, secouant sur les toits léthargiques
Son tablier d'argent plein de notes magiques,
Réveillant sans pitié les dormeurs ennuyeux,
Sautant à petits pas comme un oiseau joyeux,
Vibrant, ainsi qu'un dard qui tremble dans la cible;
Par un frêle escalier de cristal invisible,
Effarée et dansante, elle descend des cieux;
Et l'esprit, ce veilleur fait d'oreilles et d'yeux
Tandis qu'elle va, vient, monte et descend encore,
Entend de marche en marche errer son pied sonore!

XIII

There is an interesting passage in Edward Dowden's *Southey* which gives in attractive phrase the reasons which led the poet to prefer a Flemish environment on the continent. With insight the carillon is recognised as be-

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ing a definite element in the life of those who dwell where it abounds and, in describing Southey's attitude of mind, Dowden says:

> His imagination did not soar, as did Wordsworth's, in naked solitudes; he did not commune with a presence immanent in external nature; the world, as he viewed it, was an admirable habitation for mankind—a habitation with a history. Even after he had grown a mountaineer, he loved a humanised landscape, one in which the gains of man's courage, toil, and endurance are apparent. Flanders, where the spade has wrought its miracles of diligence, where the slow canal-boat glides, where the carillons ripple from old spires, where sturdy burghers fought for freedom, and where vellum-bound quartos might be sought and found—Flanders, on the whole, gave Southey deeper and stronger feelings than did Switzerland.

XIV

From the gallery of every carillon tower, however low, in the flat nether lands, one beholds a panorama of great beauty, of animation in the towns, of repose in the country. The views, too, remind one of ocean reaches. Many travellers must have felt this, for often

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the watery landscape shows here and there a glistening like the sea in calm, sunny weather. Edmondo De Amicis in *Holland and Its People* describes such a scene with silvery notes of quaint bell music hovering over all.

From the top of the tower the whole of Rotterdam can be seen at a glance, with all its little sharp red roofs, its broad canals, its ships scattered among houses, and all about the city a vast green plain, intersected by canals bordered by trees, sprinkled with windmills and villages hidden in masses of verdure, showing only the tops of their steeples. When I was there, the sky was clear, and I could see the waters of the Meuse shining from the neighbourhood of Bois-le-Duc, nearly to its mouth; the steeples of Dordrecht, Leiden, Delft, the Hague, and Gouda were visible, but neither far nor near was there a hill, a rising ground, a swell to interrupt the straight and rigid line of the horizon. It was like a green and motionless sea, where the steeples represented masts of ships at anchor. The eye roamed over that immense space with a sense of repose, and I felt, for the first time, that indefinable sentiment inspired by the Dutch landscape, which is neither pleasure, nor sadness, nor ennui, but a mixture of all three, and which holds one for a long time silent and motionless.

Suddenly I was startled by the sound of strange music coming from I knew not where. It was a chime of

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bells ringing a lively air, the silvery notes now falling slowly one by one, and now coming in groups, in strange flourishes, in trills, in sonorous chords, a quaint dancing strain, somewhat primitive, like the many-coloured city, on which its notes hovered like a flock of wild birds, or like the city's natural voice, an echo of the antique life of her people, recalling the sea, the solitudes, the huts, and making one smile and sigh at the same moment. This aërial concert is repeated every hour of the day and night, in all the steeples of Holland, the tunes being national airs, or from German or Italian operas. Thus in Holland the passing hour sings, as if to distract the mind from sad thoughts of flying time, and its song is of country, faith, and love, floating in harmony above the sordid noises of the earth.

XV

The *Relazione Veneziane* have been lately printed by the Dutch Government. These records show that two centuries and more before De Amicis was to describe Holland's charm, ambassadors from Venice were attracted to the unusual music they found in the Northern Netherlands. Thus Marcantonio Correr, in 1611, writing to the Senate of the

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far away Southern Republic said of the tower at Middelburg:

Ha un horologio all' uso de' Paesi Bassi, che e tutti gli quarti ed a tutte le hore suonano una quantità grande di campane musicalmente; suonano da per se con artificio et con tastature secondo ancora che si suonano gli organi.

The expression *all' uso de' Paesi Bassi,* indicates that the ambassador, who doubtless had travelled in many European countries, regarded the carillon as peculiar to the lands of Rembrandt and Rubens. Particularly interesting, too, is a passage from Francesco Belli's account of the journey of Ambassador Giorgio Giorgi in 1626.

Le campane di questi paesi servono per musica: hanno una temperatura soave ed una consonanza armonica, ch' isprime ed unisce tutte le voci; ed in Aga appunto il batter dell'hora è prevenuto da un concerto di campanelli sonori e dilicati al possibile. Aggiungo qui la industria ed il modo d'un publico benefizio, ch' è una campana di tanta, no so se io dica riputazione o superstizione, che a morti non si suona per manco di cinque ducati per hora.

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(The bells in these countries serve for music; their timbre is so sweet and their harmony so complete that they express and include all the notes of the voice; and in the Hague the striking of the hour is preceded by a concert from the belfry which is most melodious and delicate. Thrift here combines with a form of public benefaction, for a bell is so regarded, I do not know whether I should say with reverence or superstition, that for the dead it is not sounded for less than five ducats an hour.)

What was true of the Doge's ambassador was true also of representatives of the papal court. Indeed carillons seem to have attracted the attention of all travellers of culture who passed through the Low Countries. Count Giuseppi Garampi of Rimini, Prefect of the Vatican Archives, in 1764, accompanied Monsignor Oddi, then Nuncio to Switzerland and afterward Cardinal, on a journey to Holland. Monsignor Garampi, himself later Nuncio to Vienna and Cardinal, was a man of much learning and greatly interested in everything pertaining to the social conditions and customs of the countries through

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which he travelled. His journal, preserved in the Vatican, mentions *il carillon* a number of times. The one at Delft he calls *il piu armonioso di tutti questi paesi,* and of that at Utrecht he writes:

There is a carillon which is played by hand at certain hours of the day, the playing lasting each time a good half hour or three-quarters of an hour. The person who plays strikes the various bells in such a way as to produce musical chords and makes various melodies which are quite pleasing.

XVI

Living in the time of Giorgio Giorgi, and also a traveller in Holland, was the diarist John Evelyn. The tower music he heard moved him to seek out its source and the words in which he set down his discovery are interesting as the first considerable mention of the carillon by an Englishman. In Amsterdam in 1641, he wrote:

The turrets, or steeples, are adorned after a particular manner and invention; the chimes of bells are so rarely

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managed, that being curious to know whether the motion was from any engine, I went up to that of St. Nicholas, where I found one who played all sorts of compositions from the tablature before him, as if he had fingered an organ; for so were the hammers fastened with wires to several keys put into a frame twenty feet below the bells, upon which, by help of a wooden instrument, not much unlike a weaver's shuttle, that guarded his hand, he struck on the keys and played to admiration. All this while, through the clattering of the wires, din of the too nearly sounding bells, and noise that his wooden gloves made, the confusion was so great that it was impossible for the musician, or any that stood near him, to hear anything himself; yet, to those at a distance, and especially in the streets, the harmony and the time were the most exact and agreeable.

XVII

Charles Burney, Doctor of Music, and father of Frances Burney, the novelist, published in 1773, *A Journal of a Tour in the Netherlands*. He was constantly enlivened by the music of bells on his travels and gives details of the "passion for carillons" which he observed at Courtrai, Ghent, Liége, Gronin-

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gen and elsewhere. At Amsterdam he met Pothoff, who was considered the most famous bell player of his generation, and the skill of this remarkable man awakened Burney's great admiration.

I attended M. Pothoff, who is not young and totally blind, to the tower of the Stad-huys, of which he is carillonneur; he has had this employment many years, having been elected to it at the age of thirteen. He had very much astonished me on the organ, after all I had heard in the rest of Europe; but in playing these bells his amazing dexterity raised my wonder much higher, for he executed with his two hands passages that would be very difficult to play with ten fingers; shakes, beats, swift divisions, triplets, and even arpeggios, he has contrived to vanquish.

He began with a Psalm tune, with which their high Mightinesses are chiefly delighted, and which they require at his hands whenever he performs, which is on Tuesdays and Fridays; he next played variations upon the Psalm tune with great fancy and even taste; when he had performed this task, he was so obliging as to play a quarter of an hour extempore in such a manner as he thought would be more agreeable to me than psalmody; and in this he succeeded so well that I sometimes forgot both the difficulty and the defects of the instrument; he

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never played in less than three parts, making the bass and the measures constantly with the pedals. I never heard a greater variety of passages in so short a time; he produced effects by the pianos and fortes and the crescendo in the shake, both as to loudness and velocity, which I did not think possible upon an instrument that seemed to require little other merit than force in the performer.

XVIII

So much did the carillon of the Delft church delight another English traveller, Sir John Carr, in 1806, that we see his imagination multiplying the number of its bells many times.

The chimes of this church, or, as they are called, the carillons, are very numerous, consisting of four or five hundred bells, which are celebrated for the sweetness of their tones. By this invention a whole town is entertained in every quarter of it; that spirit of industry which pervades the kingdom, no doubt originally suggested this mode of amusing a large population without making it necessary for them to quit their vocations one moment to enjoy them.

And a few years ago Hilaire Belloc gave

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of the same Delft spire this extremely lyrical description. Nor was he to be outdone in generously providing bells!

The very structure of the thing is bells. Here the bells are more even than the soul of a Christian spire; they are its body, too, its whole self. An army of them fills up all the space between the delicate supports and framework of the upper parts. For I know not how many feet, in order, diminishing in actual size, and in the perspective, also, of that triumphant elevation, stand ranks on ranks of bells, from the solemn to the wild, from the large to the small, a hundred, or two hundred, or a thousand. There is here the prodigality of Brabant and Hainaut and the Batavian blood, a generosity and a productivity in bells without stint, the man who designed it saying: "Since we are to have bells, let us have bells; not measured out, calculated, expensive, and prudent bells, but careless bells; self-answering, multitudinous bells; bells without fear, bells excessive and bells innumerable; bells worthy of the ecstacies that are best thrown out and published in the clashing of bells."

Nor is the wealth of these bells in their number only, but also in their use—for they are not reserved in any way, but ring tunes and add harmonies at every half and a quarter, and at all the hours, both by night and by day. Nor must you imagine that there is any obsession of noise through this; they are far too high and melodious,

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and, what is more, too thoroughly a part of all the spirit of Delft to be more than a perpetual and half-forgotten impression of continual music; they render its air sacred and fill it with something so akin to an uplifted silence as to leave one—when one has passed from their influence—asking what balm that was which soothed all the harshness of sound about one.

XIX

More desirous of extending the knowledge and influence of the art of tower music than any one who had preceded him was Herbert Reginald Haweis, English clergyman. Some forty years ago in his *Music and Morals* he aimed to show his fellow-countrymen that Belgian bell-playing was musically far superior to English change-ringing and endeavoured, but without success, to arouse a national interest in the carillon. His book contains an embellished yet interesting account of a competition such as not infrequently has taken place either for some prize of honor or to gain the post of carillonneur.

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The account begins with a description of the scene and gives then the conditions of the contest.

On the 1st of July, 1745, the town of Louvain was astir at an early hour; the worthy citizens might be seen chatting eagerly at their shop doors, and the crowd of visitors who had been pouring into the town the day before were gathering in busy groups in the great square of Louvain, which is bounded on one side by the town hall, and on the other by the church of S. Peter. Among the crowd might be observed not only many of the most eminent musicians in Belgium, but nobles, connoisseurs, and musical amateurs, who had assembled from all parts of the country to hear the great competition for the important post of carillonneur to the town of Louvain. And the magistrates, the burgomasters, and in short all the powers, civil and ecclesiastical, were there.

All the principal organists of the place were to compete; and among them a young man, aged twenty-four, the organist of S. Peter's, who was descended from the great family of bell-founders in Belgium, and whose name was already well known throughout the country, Matthias van den Gheyn.

As the hour approached, not only the great square, but all the streets leading to it, became densely thronged, and no doubt the demand for windows at Louvain, over against S. Peter's tower, was as great as the demand

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for balconies in the City of London on Lord Mayor's Day.

Each competitor was to play at sight the airs which were to be given to him at the time, and the same pieces were to be given to each in turn. To prevent all possible collusion between the jury and the players, no preludes whatever were to be permitted before the performance of the pieces, nor were the judges to know who was playing at any given moment. Lots were to be cast in the strictest secrecy, and the players were to take their seats as the lots fell upon them.

XX

The eight volumes of *La Musique aux Pays Bas, Avant le XIX Siècle; documents inédits et annotés,* by Edmond van der Straeten, surely contain much of historic value. Hidden in a mass of details search uncovers concise conclusions here and there, and episodes illustrative of very human traits. In van der Straeten's summing up the question of bell tuning we read:

A good bell is not made by chance but is the result of

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a wise combination of qualities and thought, and a fine carillon is as precious as a violin by Stradivarius.

And offered in another chapter there is a tale of royal prerogative to this effect:

John V. of Portugal visited the Netherlands about 1730, and was so delighted with the carillon music he heard that he determined to have a set of bells for his sumptuous palace then building at Mafra. The price having been ascertained, it was guardedly suggested by his treasurer that the cost was great. This implied criticism so offended the self-esteem of the monarch that he replied: "Nâo julguei que era tâo barato; quero dois"—"I did not think it would be so cheap; I wish two." And these he got, for two carillons of 48 bells each, played by clavier and clockwork, exist at Mafra.

XXI

Racial influence rather than political frontiers has fixed the bounds of the carillon. *La Flandre française,* a name by which the departments of *Nord* and *Pas-de-Calais* are sometimes known in France, has a population

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Netherlandish in race and even in language. Arras, Douai, Lille, Cambrai and Dunkirk and other towns there have long had towers well furnished with musical bells.

Jean Lorédan, of Armentières, in a recent sketch, *Vieux Carillon flamand,* tells of the old-fashioned music as he listened to it summer evenings in the peaceful garden of his childhood, and of its playing now to warring men.

Depuis six mois les Allemands bombardent cette petite ville d'Armentières, ses églises, ses fabriques, son vieux beffroi construit au temps de la domination espagnole.

Un vieux beffroi de briques rouges, noircies par les pluies du ciel et les fumées des usines. Il date de Philippe II d'Espagne. Son carillon, beaucoup plus jeune, provient de Napoléon III seulement.

Pauvre petite ville industrielle, si triste, simple chef-lieu de canton, mais peuplé de trente mille habitants. Pauvre petit carillon! Je l'entends encore, en écrivant ces lignes. Il chante un air bien démodé, qui fut jadis populaire. Il vibre au fond de moi, évoquant les mélancoliques images des jours passés. Je l'ai si souvent entendu! Il amusa ma jeunesse. Enfant, sagement assis auprès de ma mère, qui brodait sous la tonnelle du jardin, j'écoutais

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cette musique et, presque toujours, elle m'attristait. Pourtant elle me plaisait.

* * * *

Oh! par les calmes soirs d'été, sur le fond cristallin du ciel blondissant, ces vieux clochers pointus, ces cheminées d'usines, ces toits rouges, ces toits bleuâtres; et cette petite voix qui monte, frêle, cassée, si vieille, chantonnant sa chanson démodée!

* * * *

Il sait, le vieux beffroi têtu. Il a vu tant de choses en sa longue existence! Peut-être, du haut de sa tourelle antique, noircie par les pluies du ciel et les fumées d'usines, a-t-il vu, là-bas, les combats de ces hommes, leurs horribles combats et leurs défaites, l'Yser bourbeux tout rouge de leur sang. Et il ne doute plus. Il est heureux. Il chante. Il chante sa vieille chanson démodée et vivace.

Il chantera demain, joyeusement — annonçant aux hommes, aux femmes de chez lui, aux siens, à ses enfants, la délivrance et la victoire.

XXII

Joost van den Vondel, the greatest of Dutch poets, made verses more than three hundred years ago *On the Carillon Music of Amsterdam*. There he wrote of the bell-master, Verbeek:

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His bell music surpasses
The finest organ tones,
He plays with bells as with cymbals.
Heaven's choirs are looking out.

Which last line a recent Dutch reviewer, commenting on the present revival of interest in the carillon art, speaks of as a bold and yet true figure of speech, recalling the painting of some Italian master with angels half concealed behind the clouds.

A later octave of the same poem is devoted to Frans Hemony, perhaps the most famous of all bell founders, and he is described as:

One who so skilfully founds his bells
That their notes charm our ear,
And make us wish to dance a bell-dance
On the airy tower galleries.

But Vondel's whole poem in its original Dutch deserves a place in an American book, in honour of those of his people who in his lifetime were entering upon their peaceful occupation of the island of Manhattan to found there a New Amsterdam.

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Op het Klokmuziek t' Amsterdam.

Nec Hortale Sonans.

Laet al d'oude Grieken zwijgen,
Stoffende, zoo trots en fier,
Van Amfions goude lier
Op wiens klank de vesten stijgen,
Bacchus zijn geboortestadt
Van den hemel zagh bescheenen,
Daer zoo veel verstroide steenen
Zich verhieven uit het plat,
Op de maet van snaer en zanger.
Wij verwondren ons niet langer.

Droom en kluchten gaven stof
Aen de lichtgelovende ouden,
Die gedroomde steden bouden.
Dat verzieren ging te grof.
Griecken, dertel in zijn vonden,
Zocht uit duisternisse licht,
Diende zich van ydel dicht,
Aen geen schijn van reên gebonden,
Toen het geestigh logens goot,
En zijn verf niet eens verschoot.

Wij, verlicht door rijper klaerheit,
Mogen spreeken, rijk van roem
Zonder dat men 't werk verbloem,
In der daedt, en in der waerheit;

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Gijsbrechts stadt wort rontom heen,
Op musijk van torenklokken,
Met een'steenen muur omtrokken,
Wort geklonken hecht aen een,
Als Verbeek met voet en vingren
Klanken weet door een te slingren.

Hij verdooft met klokgeluit
D'allereêlste kerkkooraelen,
Speelt met klokken, als cymbaelen,
's Hemels kooren kijken uit.
Op de heele en halleve uren,
En de vierendeelen me,
Steekt de Koningin der zee
t' Hooft nu trotser uit haer muuren,
Gort haer 'vruchtbren schepetuin
Met een' gordel van arduin.

Ik verhef mijn 'toon in 't zingen
Aen den Aemstel en het Y,
Op den geest van Hemony,
D'eeuwige eer van Loteringen,
Die 't gehoor verlekkren kon
Op zijn klokspijs, en zijn nooten,
Ons zoo kunstrijk toegegoten,
't Lust ons op de klokketon,
Om doorluchte torentranssen,
Eenen klokkedans te danssen.

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Cybele behaelt geen prijs
Door geschal van keteltrommen,
Nu de torentranssen brommen,
Met een liefelijker wijs
Dan haer dolle Korybanten.
Geen of een alleen vermagh
Om te voeren nacht en dagh
Eenen rey van musikanten.
Voert dien klokhelt op 't altaer
Eens gezien in duizent jaer.

XXIII

A younger brother and always the active partner of Frans Hemony, was Pieter, and he it was who wrote *On the Uselessness of C sharp and D sharp in the Bass of Carillons.* Pieter was profoundly religious, having a chapel in his own house at Amsterdam, where he heard mass daily. His close friend, the Abbot de Loose, Prior of the Benedictines at Eename in Belgium, was an ardent lover of bell music and the subject is often taken up in their lately discovered correspondence.

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Near the end of his life Hemony wrote de Loose:

After the bells now making have been tuned and shipped, I am resolved to dismiss my workmen and live in repose, having worked forty-four years at founding with my own hands.

I do not hope to regain my health, but that gives me no sorrow for I am resigned to the goodness of God. I know that one must die sooner or later. I desire no other thing now but to pass the rest of my days in tranquillity and in being able to render service to my friends, among whom Your Reverence holds the first place.

Frans lived from 1597 to 1667 and Pieter from 1619 to 1680, and it is interesting to notice their contemporaries in the Netherlands. Such consideration will indicate that the carillon was the manifestation in music of the spirit of a people who at the same time were showing great genius in many other directions. Rembrandt, ver Meer, Rubens, van Dyck, Frans Hals, and Pieter de Hooch all lived at this period. Likewise Lieven de Key, the master builder, and Visscher, the famous engraver, and, as we have seen, Von-

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del, the dramatist and poet. Tromp and de Ruyter were winning their naval victories, and Grotius was writing his great works on international law.

Warm in his friendship Pieter was equally vigorous in controversy. His little book was that of a partisan, but its conclusions were formally endorsed within its pages by the names of the city carillonneurs of Brielle, Delft, and Amsterdam, and it ended with these lively verses by Dirck Scholl of Delft directed against Quiryn van Blankenburgh, official carillonneur of the Hague, who, it appears, had strongly argued that C sharp and D sharp were necessary:

De Cis en Dis die zijn ter Gouw,
Is dat niet volmaakt gebouw?
Quirinus geeft het woord van Ja,
Kan 't beter voor ons dan niet besta?

Hij raad de Stad en leid haar om
Tot iets dat meesten tijd blijft stom:
Ja ieder slag kost een pond groot,
Zij hangen daar als levend-dood.

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Which may thus be put in English:

Those bells Cis and Dis of old Gouda's big Chime,
In truth were they bought to make melody fine?
Quirinus says: Yes, that their music is rare.
To us it were well had they never hung there.

The city was cheated and wrongly induced
To purchase what scarcely could ever be used.
Each stroke of these bells costs a pound, so 'tis said;
Pretending they're living, in fact they are dead!

XXIV

Mechlin has in Dr. Georges van Doorslaer a most devoted carillon historian. In his pamphlet *Les Carillons de Malines,* published a score of years ago, he gives a tale of the French revolutionary period which thus recounts experiences possibly to be paralleled in our own day:

It was by diplomacy that the carillon of St. Rombold's at Mechlin was saved from destruction in 1792, when Gérard Haverals was carillonneur. The revolutionary council had decreed that all the Mechlin bells should be melted and made into cannon. Then Haverals, by his ready eloquence, persuaded the French authorities that

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at least the best carillon should be preserved. For otherwise, he asked, how properly could be celebrated "la gloire de la république?" Later the reaction came, and he received a sharp reprimand by the succeeding town council for the republican songs he had played. His beloved bells, though, were safe, and again he changed his tunes to suit changed times. Happily his devotion and skill were counted of value and he continued as carillonneur until he died in 1841, being on the verge of fourscore years. He had played the bells in St. Rombold's since he was seventeen.

XXV

Looking into modern books we find artists and travellers responsive with ear and eye to carillon music and its setting. Often George Wharton Edwards in *Some Old Flemish Towns* gives sketches full of movement made from where he set his easel under belfry towers, and companionable to the pictures he puts description of the music he heard.

It is Arnold Bennett who tells us, writing of Belgium:

On that first visit I went to Bruges and there under-

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stood for the first time what a historical city of art could be. Bruges was to me incredible in its lofty and mellow completeness. It was a town in a story; its inhabitants were characters out of unread novels; its chimes were magic from the skies.

Veere's ancient carillon and fascinating children have had a poetic and affectionate chronicler in William Harman van Allen of our own country and the same bells have been praised by Camille Lemonnier, the Belgian author, in his *C'était l'été.*

But who listens closer than E. V. Lucas to the Netherland bell music? In that most delightful book, *A Wanderer in Holland,* he calls the Vyver:

A jewel set in the midst of the Hague, beautiful by day and beautiful by night, with fascinating reflections in it at both times, and a special gift for the transmission of the sound of bells in a country where bells are really honoured.

What more graceful tribute, too, than his to the Lange Jan carillon of Middelburg:

One cannot say more for persistent chimes than this—at Middelburg it is no misfortune to awake in the night!

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XXVI

Not even a literary picture of Zeeland, the province of Middelburg and Veere, could be true without remembrance of the lovable little people there in miniature peasant costume. In Middelburg the carillon early every morning in May rejoices that winter has departed and that spring has come, and childhood's part in this song is nowhere happier told than by Marie Boddaert in *Onder 't Klokkenspel.*

"Kling-klang . . ."
't Was vroeg, Zondag morgen, en de eerste van Mei.
Hoog boven 't nog rustende stedeke zong,
Van d'omgang des torens de klinglende rei,
Het juublende Meilied, en luisterend vong
De dauwige vlakte, de dommlende stroomen,
De blauwende ruimte het feestlied: *"Kling-klang,*
"De Mei is gekomen met zon en met zang,
"De minlijke Mei is gekomen!"

"He, de eerste van Mei!—Blijf niet liggen voor 't raam!"
Daar vloog het hoog open. Bruin-oogje keek uit,
De vlugste van 't vijftal. Zij sprongen te zaâm
Met windsnelle voetjes naar de opene ruit . . .

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't Kozijn op!—De knietjes naar boven getrokken,
De neusjes vooruit en de Meie in het oog,
De lachende snuitjes al luistrend omhoog
Naar 't beier'n der klinglende klokken.

"Kling-klang . . ."
Wat pret al dat leven, die stoeiende vlucht
Van tuimlende klanken gestrooid over straat,
Langs daken en gevels uit zonnige lucht!
Eer 't mondje het wist, ging de tong al op maat.
Vijf kleuters voor 't opene venster gedrongen,
Losbarstend in zang, van de blozende leên
De luchtige nachtpon ter helfte gegleên:
De Mei door de Meie bezongen!

Which in English habiliment may run thus:

"Kling-klang . . ."
'Twas early on Sunday, and the first day of May.
High over the yet sleeping city rang out,
From the tower's great belfry, a gay tinkling chorus,
The jubilant May song, and listening about
The meadows so dewy, the rivulets drowsy,
The great blue of heaven, caught the feast song: *"Kling-klang,*
"Again May is with us with sun and with song,
"Again May enchanting, is with us!"

"'Tis May-day! O, linger not. Open your window."
Then open it flew, and gay Brown Eyes peeped out,

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The first of the five. Then all sprang to the window.
  Like wind, little feet flew to wide-open sash,
Quick climbing on knees to see over the sill,
  Small noses in air, happy May in their eyes.
And bright laughing faces, so eagerly listening
    To the carillon's quaint, merry playing.

"Kling-klang . . ."
How joyful this clangor, and deep wrangling sounds
  Of bells gaily ringing, over street, over dune,
Over roof, over gable, pouring down from the skies!
  Before they quite knew it their ears caught the tune,
And five little maidens, full thronging the window,
  Burst forth into singing, their dear rosy bodies
Now covered but half by the down-slipping gowns.
    It was May greeting May with a song!

XXVII

A year ago Hall Caine brought together, in *King Albert's Book*, tributes from many lands to the nobility of character of that King and his people. Often the carillon comes into the thought of the contributors there as an element in Belgian life. Says the dramatist Maurice Donnay:

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"O Belgique! pays noir du charbon, blondes plages de sable, vertes prairies, eau dormante des canaux, et tant de vieilles villes aux merveilles d'architecture: belles cathédrales qui sont comme de la pierre solide; hauts beffrois dont les cloches convoquaient à l'approche de l'ennemi les bourgeois qui pendant des siècles se sont unis pour combattre pour leurs libertés; vielles halles, hôtels de ville, dont la façade, pierre et or, nous montre le style gothique dans sa richesse et son élégance tertiaires, silencieux béguinages. La Belgique! elle est, comme l'Italie, une des patries sacrées de l'Art. . . . Malines, Louvain, vos gais carillons ne tinteront plus dans l'air léger. Guerre abominable où il faut pleurer les hommes et les pierres!"

But among all who speak in the book, no one better perceives the place the carillon holds in the affections of the people than William De Morgan. His *Visit to Louvain* is a sketch at once playful and pathetic.

Fifty years ago! And I who write this had never been out of England, though I was a quarter of a century old!

I decided to go, on an impulse. In those days the *Baron Osy* went from London Bridge to Antwerp. Antwerp was on the Continent, and would do—so I went on board the *Baron Osy*. I remember lying on deck all night looking up at the sky. For it was meteor night in

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August, and phenomena were doing themselves credit, astronomically.

I fell asleep and woke in the dawn, to find the banks of the Scheldt sliding past us, and the river outstripping the banks. Then, Antwerp. I went to an inn on the quay. The keeper thereof was an Englishman, who had invented a saxhorn. He had a low opinion of the Continent, but gave me very good boiled beef.

Next day I proceeded to sample Flanders. I can't say which town I tasted first. But I remember being in Bruges, Ghent, Oudenaarde, Malines, Louvain and Ypres. I have now the most vivid remembrance of Bruges, Oudenaarde, and Louvain.

Especially the last. For the hotel where I stayed was close by the old Town Hall, and the carillon sounded the hours and quarters all through the night. Every hour it played through

> Voici le sabre, le sabre, le sabre,
> Voici le sabre, le sabre de mon père,

and, at each quarter, took an instalment; at the rate of a sabre for the first quarter, two for the half-hour, and the whole line for the three-quarters. The night was hot, and I could not stand the windows shut—so I got very little sleep.

Next day I schemed *causerie,* based on this, with my delightful hostess below. It was an opportunity to practice my French.

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"Je ne poovay par dormir parceque du song des cloches. Ils singt assez pour eveiller les morts."

"Plait-il? Dites-le-moi encore une fois. Ze bell weck you up? Ees that ride?"

I felt my forces demoralised, and merely answered: "We!"

Marie—she was Marie—turned to a clean old fossil, like a Van Eyck portrait, and said: "Eh—grand'mère, ecoutez-ça! M'sieu n'a pas pu dormir. Il entend toujours les cloches du carillon." To which the old lady, after hearing it a second time, louder, said: "Eh, mon Dieu!"

I adventured yet a little more into French speech, saying: "Il me prendrait beaucoup de temps à m'accoutumer . . ." and stuck. But Marie helped me out, saying: "A vous y accoutumer? Oui vraiment! Mais ici on entend la carillon dès sa naissance—jusqu'à la mort. Je suis née dans la maison, moi; grand-mère aussi. S'il n'y avait plus carillon, il n'y aurait plus sommeil, ni pour elle, ni pour moi." At least I think that is what came through those white teeth, or very near it, fifty years ago.

And Marie may be turned of seventy if . . . Well! if German Culture has spared her. But neither she nor any other Louvainoise will ever sleep the better now for the music of the bells, nor any guest of hers be kept awake an hour. For the old hostelry, I take it, is a heap of ashes, and the sound of the carillon is ended for ever.

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XXVIII

Floating down from St. Rombold's Tower Mechlin's carillon music (now stilled, but as yet not irrevocably;—alas for the fate of Ypres and Louvain!) has borne "certainly the crown." Thousands have listened on summer evenings to the inspired notes of the master bell-master, Josef Denyn, whom the King of the Belgians in 1912, amid the applause of the nation, made *Chevalier de l'Ordre de Leopold,* an honour bestowed in recognition of Denyn's twenty-five years of distinguished service to his country. The scene where this great player's art most has manifested itself has found a sympathetic interpreter in Havelock Ellis, and in *Impressions and Comments* he gives the spirit of a memorable night.

The music of César Franck always brings before me a man who is seeking peace with himself and consolation with God, at a height, above the crowd in isolation, as it were in the uppermost turret of a church tower. It

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recalls the memory of the unforgettable evening when Denyn played on the carillon at Mechlin, and from the canal side I looked up at the little red casement high in the huge Cathedral tower where the great player seemed to be breathing out his soul, in solitude, among the stars. Always when I hear the music of Franck—a Fleming, also, it may well be by no accident—I seem to be in contact with a sensitive and solitary spirit, absorbed in self-communion, weaving the web of its own Heaven and achieving the fulfilment of its own rapture.

XXIX

But since that peaceful night war has been thrust upon Belgium, and starvation, wounds and death have been her portion. And in these latter days sorrow has been the undertone wherever bells remain to play. How appealing the scene to which the vision of Thomas Hardy leads us in his *Sonnet on the Belgian Expatriation.*

I dreamt that people from the land of chimes
Arrived one autumn morning with their bells,
To hoist them on the towers and citadels

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Of my own country, that the musical rhymes
Rung by them into space at measured times
Amid the market's daily stir and stress,
And the night's empty starlit silentness,
Might solace souls of this and kindred climes.

Then I awoke: and lo, before me stood
The visioned ones, but pale and full of fear;
From Bruges they came, and Antwerp, and Ostend,
No carillons in their train. Vicissitude
Had left these tinkling to the invaders' ear,
And ravaged street, and smouldering gable-end.

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NOTES

FEW of those who have not lived in the Low Countries, or known them well, realize the depth of meaning embodied often in the words quoted from various authors in preceding pages. Familiarity with the scenes of which the Carillon is a part would indeed be the best assurance of such realization, but since that acquaintance is not the good fortune of all, some book knowledge, with more or less of a technical flavour, must take its place. The account of the revival of the Carillon art in the Netherlands and the description of the concert at Mechlin given in these notes will aid even more in the comprehension of a musical development which is of decided interest from both racial and civic points of view.

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I

AN EVENING CONCERT AT MECHLIN

[*From "Carillons of Belgium and Holland"*]

An Antwerp friend to whom we had described the charm of the Dutch carillons and of those we had heard in Belgium, and the excellent playing of the different carillonneurs in many places, would listen with courteous interest and then, when we had finished, would look up with a smile and say, "But you have not yet heard Mr. Denyn. Wait!"

We felt that he spoke with judgment and knowledge, for he had been at the great contest in 1910 at Mechlin, where carillonneurs of the two countries had assembled, to play in turn in a two-days' contest on the bells of S. Rombold's tower, after which the King's prize had been awarded to the most accurate and most finished competitor. That outdoor scene of which he told us, the Grand' Place filled with thousands of eager listeners, somehow suggests a splendid finale of an opera. It was with unusual interest, then, that we set forth for Mechlin to hear the master carillonneur give one of his famous Monday evening concerts.

Mechlin lies midway between Antwerp and Brussels and is reached by train from either city in half an hour. It was once the centre of great political and ecclesiastic

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activity, and is still the seat of the Primate of Belgium. Much of its charm remains and there is delightful repose in the old streets where many picturesque gables of the sixteenth and seventeenth century houses, so characteristic of the Flemish Netherlands, look down upon the traveller. In the street of the Twelve Apostles there is a small Béguinage, and near it a lace-making school where the sisters teach children to make the famous Mechlin lace. The River Dyle winds in and out through the city in a charming manner, past quaint houses and ancient quays, where verdure takes root in the joints of the stones and is reflected in the peaceful water. An air of great tranquillity dwells in the entire city, and as if to emphasise this—and to approve it—high above the red roofs and fine trees, rises the splendid square tower of S. Rombold's Cathedral, a serene and noble landmark.

As there was yet a full hour before the concert, we drove to Mr. Denyn's house—for the Denyns were already our good friends—and taking the three youngest children in the carriage with us, we started for a short tour about the town. The children were delighted and talked incessantly. At one point they made us notice that people were bringing out chairs and placing them in rows in a park near the cathedral tower, and they explained that this was always done on the nights when "papa" played. Then one of them confided to us it was "la fête de mamman"; so we drove to a flower shop to buy a few roses. All three children eagerly jumped out of the carriage and went in with us to help choose the flowers,

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and the shop-keeper and her husband and three friends who had stopped for an evening chat all aided and applauded our choice.

Finally the coachman called in to us with much excitement that it was nearing eight o'clock, and we must at once go back, for his carriage would not be allowed to cross the Grand' Place after the eight o'clock bell in S. Rombold's tower ceased to toll. We therefore started hastily for the Denyn house, dropped the children bearing their flowers and drove across the square as fast as our horse would take us.

We had barely reached the Grand' Place when the carillon began to play the melody that precedes the striking of the hour. It was eight o'clock! The great square was filled with people, some standing, but most of them sitting at small tables outside cafés, and as the bells began to play, the talking and laughter grew less and last preparations were made for the enjoyment of the concert. Our carriage was the only one in sight; the coachman snapped his whip again and again until he started the horse into a run. Galloping across the great square and into a narrow street, we stopped before the entrance of a small school, the garden of which was our destination, since there the carillon could be heard to the greatest advantage. Our arrival was accomplished in the utmost haste, for the great, deep bell began to toll the hour as we descended from the carriage. Having left us, our coachman whipped his tired horse again into a gallop and dashed off into the dusk.

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In answer to our ring, a panel of the great door was opened by a woman who held in her left hand a large old-fashioned lantern lighted by a candle. "Bon soir, Madame et Messieurs," she said smilingly. Then in a hurried whisper she added, "Il faut vous dépêcher," and, leading the way, quickly conducted us through a long paved yard into the pleasant school garden. Just as we reached it, the last stroke of eight o'clock sounded.

In those northern countries the day is long even in late August, and it was still twilight. Against the southern sky, framed in by two dark trees in the foreground, rose the broad, rugged tower of S. Rombold's. High up, near the top of the tower, from a narrow opening shone out a faint, dull light.

After the bell ceased striking, and the vibration of its deep and solemn tone had died away, there was silence. So long a silence it seemed, so absolute, that we wondered if it ever was to be broken. Then pianissimo, from the highest, lightest bells, as if not to startle us, and from far, far above the tower, it seemed—indeed, as if very gently shaken from the sky itself—came trills and runs that were angelic! Rapidly they grew in volume and majesty as they descended the scale until the entire heaven seemed full of music. Seated in the garden we watched the little light in the tower, where we knew the unseen carillonneur sat at his clavier and drew the music from his keys, and yet as we watched and listened, we somehow felt that the music came from somewhere far beyond the tower, far higher than that dim light,

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and was produced by superhuman hands. Sometimes in winter, after icicles have formed, there comes a thaw, and one by one they tinkle down gently and timidly at first; then bolder in a mass they come till, like an avalanche, they crash down with a mighty roar. All of this the music suggested. It was low, it was loud; it was from one bell, it was from chords of many bells; it was majestic, it was simple. And every note seemed to fall from above, from such heights that the whole land heard its beauty. It was as if a great master had said: "I am no longer content to sit at my cathedral organ and give pleasure to a few hundreds only; I must give joy to thousands." So he mounts the cathedral tower, and plays his sonata, or his prelude, or his songs upon the great clavier, so that all the world may hear.

As the hour passed, daylight died, but the tower grew more distinct in the light of the full moon rising over the trees. We had programmes which we passed in silence to one another, and if there was occasion to speak, we spoke in whispers. It seemed that if we moved or spoke aloud, the tower, the far away light, and the music might all vanish. Nothing we had ever experienced had been like this. Sometimes the sounds were so low that we found ourselves bending forward to hear them. They seemed to come from an infinite distance, so faint and delicate were they. Then at other times, great chords, in the volume of many organs, burst forth rapturously!

The concert ended promptly at nine with the national air of Belgium. Directly after this the great bell slowly,

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solemnly struck the hour. Leaving the quiet garden, we walked back to the square where all was liveliness again.

At the foot of the tower we waited for Mr. Denyn. He soon appeared at its door in happiest mood, and leaving his lantern for the watchman who spends the whole night in the tower to keep guard over the sleeping city, he joined us, giving us the friendliest of greetings in French. As he dons for his work, which is far more strenuous than is the playing of any other musical instrument, a special costume kept in the tower room, he came out looking neat and cool and ready to enjoy with his friends the remainder of the evening. Invited by him, we went to the Cheval d'Or, a little café nearby. Here we came upon a scene of much gayety, one which was in marked contrast to the quietness of the surroundings in which we had spent the last hour. As we entered, many rose in honour of Mr. Denyn, and coming forward grasped his hand and expressed in Flemish their delight in his playing. He invited us to sit down with him, and to have coffee or beer. As we sat together, after the greetings of the crowd were over, he spoke at length and with much enthusiasm of the powerful influence music had in promoting a nation's happiness. And he said that in giving these concerts which thousands enjoy, he felt he was contributing something to the education of the people. But the time for our return to Antwerp drew near and so, with mysteriously moving thoughts of the past, awakened by his music, and with feelings of

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aspiration, we parted from this large-hearted, simple man, the master bell-master.

II

CARILLON REVIVAL IN THE NETHERLANDS

[*From letters to the author and other sources.*]

Carillons in The Netherlands are at present the subject of special interest, both from the standpoint of their value as indicating national character, and as a means of attracting foreign travel.

The revival is particularly noticeable in Amsterdam, where steadily more people come to listen to the playing of the carillon in the Queen's Palace, and where recently a committee of the administration of church buildings petitioned the Common Council for permission to have the carillons of the old Zuiderkerk and the Westerkerk played before divine service.

* * * *

In the festival number of "Het Orgel" celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Dutch Society of Organists, the establishment of a "Dutch Carillon Council" was urged. The task of this Council would be to make investigations regarding the condition of carillons in the Netherlands; to insure repairs by competent persons; to provide for the proper improvement of carillons and keyboards now

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out of use; to institute evening concerts and carillon competitions, and to promote greater appreciation of carillon music.

In the summer of 1915 new life was given to suggestions made some years ago in an address before the Congress for Language and Literature at Maastricht. There it was said: Let us do honour to a characteristic national music; revive a somewhat forgotten feature in the life of our people, and stimulate interest in customs highly valued by our forefathers and for which they were ready to spend large sums of money. Let us make it our duty to promote everything that is distinctively Dutch and that will bind Dutchmen closer together for the common good. To every true national trait let us give new force.

In these anxious days of war the sense of nationality has been broadened and deepened, and all that is typical of a free Netherland, all that constitutes the charm of cities and of a landscape so rich and varied in natural beauty, is better appreciated than in the long period of 19th century indifference.

The "Dutch Carillon Council" is expected to embrace, besides the societies for the promotion of music in the largest sense of the word, all other societies which have undertaken the task of preventing neglect, lack of appreciation, or destruction of any beauty which is peculiar to the Netherlands.

* * * *

The *Haagsche Post* not long ago said: "At Mechlin

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it is in St. Rombold's tower, rising high above the surrounding old houses of the Dyle city, that the burghers find their greatest attraction to the foreign traveller. For on fine, mild summer evenings

'When the light is not quite lost
And the dark as yet unborn,'

this old, silent giant begins to live for the people. Then the miracle comes to pass that out of this weather-beaten colossus a song arises which draws the people from all directions and brings them together on the Groote Markt, and as if with magic hand, puts a stop to all traffic. For high above the city at his keyboard amid the mysterious silence of the tower, the carillonneur plays in such a way 'that the bells give forth a continuous song, a flowing melody.' "

* * * *

Recently the representatives of Arnhem were anxious to know whether the carillon, which in 1652 was bought of Frans Hemony, might not by means of improvement, be made to fulfil the requirements which the master of bell-masters demands before he is able to give his celebrated concerts. In October Mr. Denyn therefore came to Arnhem and was welcomed by the Common Council and the Burgomaster. The result of his inspection of the carillon in massive St. Eusebius tower was encouraging enough to enable him to declare that by making some slight changes and renewing the keyboard, Arnhem would have a carillon fully capable of producing splendid

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effects. The improvements were decided upon, and the inauguration of the restored carillon will probably take place next April on Juliana day.

III

DENYN IN ENGLAND

[*Condensed from the London Times.*]

The musical critic of the *London Times* recently gave an account of M. Denyn's recital at Cattistock, England, where there is a carillon of 33 bells. The *Times* article substantially says: Our Belgian friends have told us of their music; M. Cammaerts and Sir Edward Elgar have made us feel it as the heart-beat of a noble country; and the events of the last few months have done more than the newspaper articles of many years could do to make English people wish to share in this music.

* * * *

When M. Denyn first began to play, it was difficult, no doubt from the constant association of bell sounds with mechanical chimes, to realize that one was listening to music with a personality behind it, music in which the touch of the player is as vital as on the piano.

* * * *

The recital was primarily for an English village audience which had had Belgian guests staying among them for the past year, and what could be more suitable than a programme of Belgian and English folksongs? "Chan-

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son d'Ypres" and "Valeureux Liégeois" and "Air local de Malines" were followed by "Home, Sweet Home," "The Banks of Allan Water," and "The March of the Men of Harlech," and the national anthems of the Allies brought the recital to a close exactly at the hour. It was an hour of simple and beautiful tunes ringing out over the sunlit fields. But M. Denyn's repertory includes much music of a more advanced kind, and music which is really more suited to the genius of the carillon. A melody, requiring sustaining power, with an accompaniment of chords chiefly below the melody, does not make the best bell music. Broken chords, impulsive arpeggios, delicate traceries of ornament, in fact the style of the harpsichord, provide the true technique of the carillonneur. When M. Denyn, after the concert proper was over, dashed into an exultant improvised prelude it reminded one by its manner of expression of nothing so much as a toccata by Bach.

IV

ORIGIN, CONSTRUCTION AND TECHNIQUE

[*From "Carillons of Belgium and Holland"*]

Many travellers have sought to comprehend the secret of the attractiveness of the Low Countries. Complex and elusive that secret doubtless is, yet I believe we shall

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find a clue for our search in a knowledge of this distinctive music. Surely its long-continued hold upon the people of Holland and Belgium, its association with stirring events in their history, its touch with prosaic duties, its democratic spirit, its companionship with time, its seat in lofty towers, and its maintenance at the public charge—all give suggestions of racial temperament well worth considering. Assuredly no music joins more perfectly in the celebration of days of national rejoicing; but, better still, it sends down from airy heights an influence which lightens routine and to happy occupation adds an accompaniment of surpassing charm.

* * * *

The story of the origin and development of the carillon would fill many pages. It is enough to say here, however, that upon the basis of a few bells giving simple songs, in connection with the striking mechanism of great clocks, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, there was developed by the end of the sixteenth century a noble musical instrument, well adapted to its place in lofty municipal towers, lasting for generations and peculiarly fitted to give pleasure to thousands of people throughout the Low Countries.

* * * *

Before entering the domain of this unique music, it seems desirable to define the word carillon. A carillon is a set of bells, (a) attuned to intervals of the *chromatic* scale, (b) many in number, sometimes four octaves or more, (c) the lowest often several tons in weight, with

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each succeeding bell smaller, so that in the highest octave the weight of each bell is scarcely 20 pounds, and (d) hung fixed, that is, so as not to swing. Owing to its more convenient form and long acceptance, the word chime often has been used in English poetry and prose when, in reality, the bells written of were a carillon. Strictly, a chime, ring, or peal is a set of bells generally not more than about an octave, attuned to intervals of the *diatonic* scale with sometimes one or two additional half tones. The bells of a carillon usually are connected (a) with a keyboard by means of which a bell-master or carillonneur causes their clapper to strike the inside of their sound bow, and (b) with a clockwork mechanism which causes a hammer to strike the outside.

Between a carillon and a chime this fundamental difference exists, namely: the carillon is essentially chromatic in its intervals while the chime is essentially diatonic, these terms being used as defined by Dr. C. W. Pearce, in *Modern Academic Counterpoint,* where he says: "Diatonic means proceeding mostly by tones as opposed to chromatic, which proceeds by semitones." The chromatic characteristic, combined as it is with the extended compass and range in size of the bells, enables a master of a carillon keyboard not only to play the notes of a great variety of music but to interpret its sentiment and to produce effects which are distinctive and beyond the power of any other musical instrument.

The passion for this music from the beginning of its larger development in the sixteenth century followed ra-

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cial influence rather than political frontiers. With scarcely an exception, each principal town of the ancient Netherlands, both north and south, early established its municipal carillon and maintained it with devoted spirit. In northern France, too, as at Douai, Arras, Lille, Cambrai, and Dunkirk, and here and there in border towns of western Germany, as at Malmedy and Düren, bell towers have long existed, and many of these possess even now their complement of harmonious bells.

* * * *

In the very heart of the ancient Belgian city of Ghent is the Place Saint Bavon, at one side of which rises the great bell-tower. Here so modern a device as an electric lift serves those who would ascend without effort. The heights of the belfry once gained, and the bell chamber entered, the explorer finds himself among a greater company of bells both large and small than he has ever before seen. He is, indeed, in the midst of a carillon of the first order. Should he count he will find 52 bells, fixed upon a heavy framework of wooden beams, and extending in parallel rows, tier above tier, filling the sides of the great tower room. The little bells are hung the highest. The big ones just clear the floor. The largest of all is taller than a tall man; its diameter, 83 inches, is even greater than its height, and it weighs six tons. The smallest bell has both a height and a diameter of only about eight inches, and weighs less than 18 pounds.

Of greater consequence, however, than number, or size,

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or weight, is the pitch relationship of the bells. For it is constantly to be borne in mind that throughout virtually the entire compass of three or four octaves or over, it may be, the bells of every carillon progress by regular semitone or chromatic intervals. Ghent has these intervals complete through four and one-half octaves, except that in the lowest part of its bass two semitones are omitted. Because of the weight and cost of the greater bass bells, similar omissions are made in virtually all carillons. In playing, however, there is little inconvenience from this, for a bell of the octave above is used instead of any one that may be lacking.

Carillons are played in two ways: firstly, by automatic device at the hour and other periods, and secondly, by a bell-master in concert or recital. Played automatically a carillon may be thought of as a gigantic music-box. Its exact designation is then *Carillon à cylindre* or *Carillon à tambour*. Before the hour strikes and at certain other intervals this cylinder or drum is moved by a mechanism of its own which is set going at the proper moment by the great tower-clock. On the hour music is played for a minute or more; at the halves and quarters the play is for less time, and in some places at the eighths there are flourishes of a few notes.

Pins or studs of iron are placed in holes on the surface of the cylinder arranged so that as the cylinder revolves they trip levers connected with hammers which strike the outer sound bow of the bells. Tunes are set upon the cylinder by the carillonneur, and by periodic

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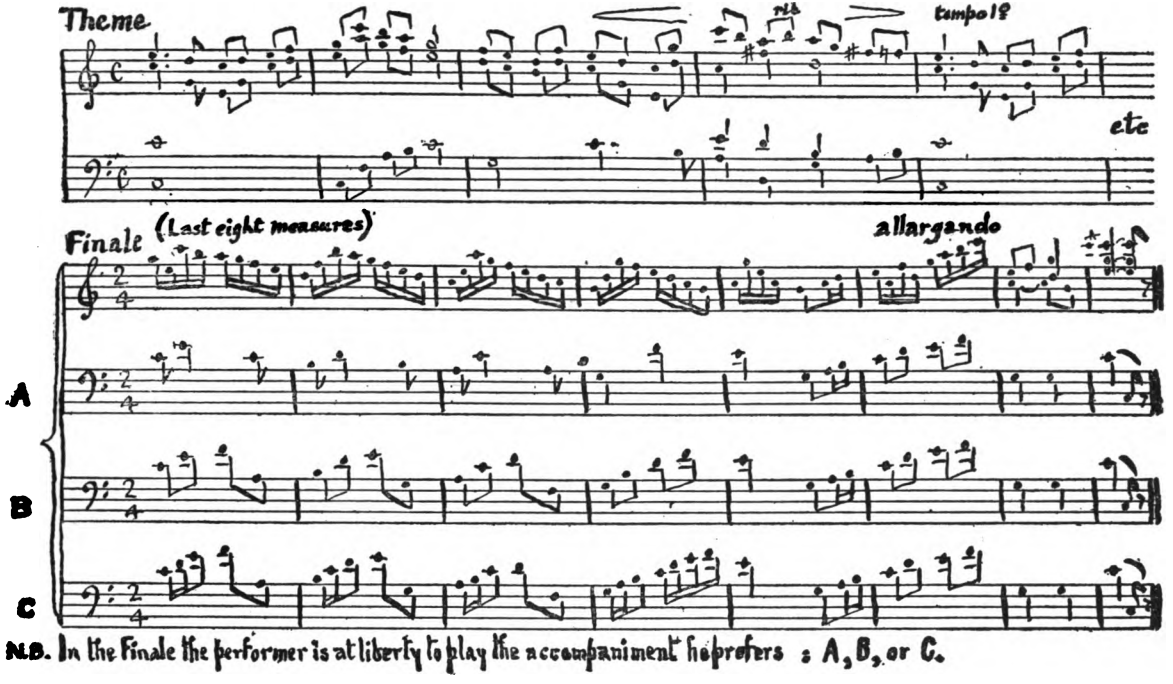
CARILLON MUSIC

A Portion of the Andante Cantabile by Josef Denyn, which the Contesting Carillonneurs were Required to Play in the Competition of Honour at Mechlin in 1910.

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changing may be made appropriate to the season of the year. Town tradition, handed down for a century or more, sometimes fixes these tunes, but more frequently the musical taste of the carillonneur governs.

There is an element in carillon music to which, so far as I know, attention has never heretofore been given. That element is the variation in expression which results from the influence that air currents, always present more or less in the open, have in curving and deflecting sound waves. By thus apparently varying the volume of the tones, nature conspires with man to make the effect of automatic play pleasing.

Played by a bell-master, or carillonneur, using a clavier or keyboard resembling that of a piano or organ, a carillon may be thought of as a gigantic pianoforte or organ. Its exact designation is then *Carillon à clavier.* During market hours, at festivals, and in midday or evening concerts, popular songs, operatic airs, national hymns and a great variety of other tunes are played by the carillonneur. This playing by means of the clavier is often called a carillon concert.

Each key of the clavier is connected by lever and wire with the clapper of its corresponding bell. In what is known as the Belgian system, perfected by Joseph Denyn, each clapper when at rest is held by a spring and guide wires in an exactly defined position close to the inner sound bow, and the bells are hung in parallel lines. The deeper-toned bells are more or less inclosed in chambers within the tower.

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The bells of the lowest octave and a half are connected also with a pedal clavier. This is done for the reason that the larger bells require a forceful stroke when it is desired to bring out their full tones, and because this arrangement gives the bell-master greater command of the resources of his instrument by allowing the use both of hands and of feet, and so enables him to play music in three or more parts.

On the manual clavier great dexterity of hand is essential, for much of the execution is with a kind of tremulando in which the keys are played from the wrist and the elbow. Scales and arpeggios are accomplished by a constant crossing of the hands. The greater part of the playing is on the smaller bells, with occasional use of the large ones. The reasons for this are that small bells are more easily sounded, and that the effect of chords is much more satisfactory on them, due to the fact that on the large bells the harmonic tones are prominent and, when sounded together, frequently interfere with each other in a disagreeable manner. This is not the case with the smaller bells, as their harmonic tones are too high in the scales of sounds to distress the ear. All degrees of crescendo and of diminuendo are possible. Vibration of the bells does not long persist, so that, apart from the fact that the effectual damping of bells is practically an impossibility, when a carillon is played by an expert performer, there is no real necessity for such a thing. With smaller bells the sound is so quickly effaced that when the effect of sustained chords is desired, it is

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obtained by a rapid tremulando, much as in pianoforte playing.

* * * *

There are to-day in Belgium about 30 carillons of importance, and in Holland about 20. If those of lesser consequence are included, the total for both countries will be well over 100.

* * * *

The crown of every belfry was a carillon. The belfry and its crown were the proud possession of every prosperous community. And to-day, wherever the carillon may hang, its bells belong to the town, their management is civic, and the bell-master is a municipal officer.

* * * *

Neither in Holland nor in Belgium have I found a place where the carillon, and the tower in which it hangs, even though it be a church spire, are not controlled and maintained by the municipal authorities. It is true that in some instances carillons are played, and that often the great separate bells are rung for church services or in religious functions, but always the dominating power in the management of the bells is civic and the religious element, if it exists at all, is entirely subordinate.

* * * *

The Hemonys, the van den Gheyns and the Dumerys were the greatest bell-founders of former times. Besides these there lived in the same period a score of others well known but somewhat less distinguished in that branch of

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the art. Hemony's bells, generally speaking, are the best; they are bright, clear, and true—epic in character. Van den Gheyn's bells are similar. Dumery's are velvety, soft, and true—elegiac in character.

Bells neither improve nor retrograde unless cracks develop. While modern music accepts certain combinations as chords not allowed by earlier composers, nevertheless the modern ear seems more sensitive and exacting as to correctness of pitch. Carillons to-day by founders such as van Aerschodt at Louvain, Belgium, and Taylor at Loughborough, England, are even more perfect than those of earlier centuries.

* * * *

Every musical instrument possesses a character of its own. To one who has heard it, this individuality is apparent in the carillon no less than in other instruments. To others, comparison may be of aid, but after all can give only a faint idea of the carillon's character and charm. Perhaps the best conception will be obtained by thinking of it as resembling an organ in majesty and a pianoforte in delicacy, but with harmonies aërial and unbounded. Like every other instrument, it must be judged when well-attuned and mechanically perfect. Awakened by the hand of a master, then, this tower music seems to come from the heavens, the silvery quality of the higher notes being carried far upon the tide of the sonorous bass tones.

* * * *

The lives of the great founders, and their rivalries, the

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exactions of contracts, the public competitions and private quarrels of carillonneurs, the holidays decreed and the elaborate ceremonies at the first playing of a carillon, the tales of capture and ransom or destruction of carillons in war, and many other phases of the art are full of romance. These all appeal to the interest and imagination in a great variety of ways, and those that are curious will find much to repay study therein.

Georges Rodenbach

Georges Rodenbach, mentioned in Chapters IX and X, was a poet of exquisite feeling and a master in the art of description. He seems to have been haunted and possessed by the Carillon music of his native Belgium and speaks of the bells in almost everything he wrote; to him they were an essential part of the landscape he loved so well. In offering *Le Miroir du Ciel natal* to God, the poet says:

J'ai varié dans l'air le concert noir des cloches
Pour m'exprimer moi-même en leurs chants qui recochent.

Et les jets d'eau montés en essors de colombe
C'est ma Foi, tour à tour, qui s'élève et retombe.

Seigneur! en ma faveur, souvenez-vous, Seigneur,
Seigneur, de l'humble effort d'une œuvre en votre honneur!

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And in the poem itself occur these verses:

Les cloches ont de vastes hymnes,
Si légères dans l'aube,
Qu'on les croirait en robes
De mousseline;
Robes des cloches balancées,
Cloches en joie et qui épanchent
Une musique blanche.
Ne sont-ce pas des mariées
Ou des Premières Communiantes
Qui chantent?

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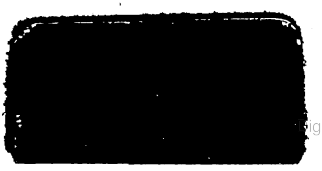

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